Working with Shy Cats

Socializing a skittish, timid, or shy rescue cat often requires a lot of patience and TLC but comes with big rewards! Here are a few tips to get you started with your "skitty kitty."

How to socialize with your timid cat

- **Provide safe hiding spots.** Block access to "bad hiding" spots, like under beds and couches. Set up cozy spaces to let them feel protected while still able to connect sights and sounds, and make eye contact with you.
- **Be present.** Spend time with your new cat as much as possible to help them adjust to your presence. Speak gently and softly, getting as low as possible to seem less intimidating.
- **Try the Slow Blink.** Slow blinking is a sign of trust for cats. Get on eye level or lower and slowly blink your eyes at your cat until they blink back.
- **Reward with treats.** Build trust by creating a positive association between your hands and food. Start by tossing a treat to see if they eat it. Gradually toss treats closer to you, encouraging the cat to approach, and eventually, eat treats right out of your hand.
- **Engage in play time.** Play time routines help to build cat confidence by tapping into their natural instincts as hunters. For a timid cat, watching/tracking a toy means they're mentally engaged.

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